



TEXAS TRENDS 2022

The Race for Harris County Judge



Hobby School of Public Affairs
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Texas Trends Survey 2022 The Race for Harris County Judge

In 2021, the Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston and the Executive Master of Public Administration Program in the Barbara Jordan – Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs at Texas Southern University launched a five-year survey project to study Texas's changing population, with emphasis on the state's Black, Latino and Asian residents. In addition to a representative sample of all Texans, the 2022 survey includes an oversample of the former two groups to allow for an objective and statistically valid report of their diverse opinions and experiences. The second survey fielded between August 11 and August 29, 2022 focused on opinions about the upcoming statewide election and issues including gun safety, the economy, criminal justice, and healthcare. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish, with 2,140 YouGov respondents 18 years of age and older, resulting in a confidence interval of +/-2.1. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education and are representative of the Texas adult population.

The results of the 2022 statewide survey will be presented in five separate reports: the 2022 general election in Texas, gun safety, the economy, criminal justice, and healthcare. In addition to the statewide survey, an oversample of Harris County adults was included to examine their opinions on the four policy issue areas above, and, for the subset of these Harris County adults who are registered to vote and indicated they were likely to vote in the November 2022 election, their vote intention in the race for county judge. This county-specific election report is based on the analysis of a sample population of 195 likely voters, with a confidence interval of +/- 7.0%. Given the small size of this population, caution should be used in interpreting the results due to the comparatively large margin of errors surrounding all of the estimates.

Executive Summary

Among the 195 Harris County likely voters surveyed, the vote intention in the county judge race is 52% for Democrat Lina Hidalgo and 42% for Republican Alexandra del Moral Mealer, with 6% undecided.

This 10 percentage point lead by Hidalgo is notably higher than the 1 percentage point lead she garnered in the Hobby School election survey released in July.

In the race for governor, Harris County voters back Democrat Beto O'Rourke by a 13 percentage point margin over Republican Greg Abbott, 53% to 40%.

In the race for lieutenant governor, Harris County voters back Democrat Mike Collier by a 13 percentage point margin over Republican Dan Patrick, 53% to 40%.

In the race for attorney general, Harris County voters back Democrat Rochelle Garza by an 18 percentage point margin over Republican Ken Paxton, 54% to 36%.

Hidalgo's 10 percentage point lead over del Moral Mealer is lower than that in Harris County of the Democratic Party's candidates for the three top statewide offices by between 3% (O'Rourke, Collier) and 8% (Garza).

Del Moral Mealer holds a 19 percentage point advantage over Hidalgo among white voters, 58% to 39%.

Hidalgo holds a 71 percentage point advantage over del Moral Mealer among Black voters, 79% to 8%, and a 44 percentage point advantage among Latino voters, 69% to 25%.

Hidalgo enjoys a 14 percentage point lead over del Moral Mealer among women, 53% to 39%, but only a 2 percentage point lead among men, 50% to 48%.

Del Moral Mealer enjoys a 16 percentage point lead over Hidalgo, 56% to 40%, among the combined Silent Generation/Baby Boomers cohort, and Hidalgo a comparable 16 percentage point lead over del Moral Mealer among Generation X, 54% to 38%.

Hidalgo is the overwhelming favorite of the combined Millennials/Generation Z cohort, with a 40 percentage point lead in vote intention over del Moral Mealer, 67% to 27%.

More than nine out of ten Harris County Democrats (93%) intend to vote for Hidalgo and more than nine out of ten Harris County Republicans (96%) intend to vote for del Moral Mealer.

Harris County Survey Adult Population Demographics and Likely Voter Demographics

The demographics for the 405 Harris County adults 18 and older surveyed (confidence interval of +/- 4.9%) in the overall survey project are as follows. Whites account for 38% of the overall survey population of 405 Harris County adults aged 18 and older, Latinos 36%, Blacks 18%, and Others 8% (Asian Americans account for 82% of the Other population, while those who identify as having a Mixed or Other racial/ethnic heritage account for 10% and Native Americans for 8%). Women account for 51% of the population, men for 48%, and those who identify as other or non-binary for 1%. Regarding generations, 27% of the population belongs to the combined Silent Generation (born between 1928-1945) and Baby Boomers (1946-1964) cohort, 18% to Generation X (Gen-X) (1965-1980), 35% to the Millennial (1981-1996) generation and 20% to Generation Z (1997-2004). The highest level of educational attainment of the respondents ranges from a high school degree or less (37%), to some college or a two-year degree (30%) to a four-year degree or postgraduate/advanced degree (33%).

While the non-election related reports we will subsequently release focus on Harris County adults, this election-related report focuses on the subset of 195 likely 2022 Harris County voters (confidence interval of +/- 7.0%).

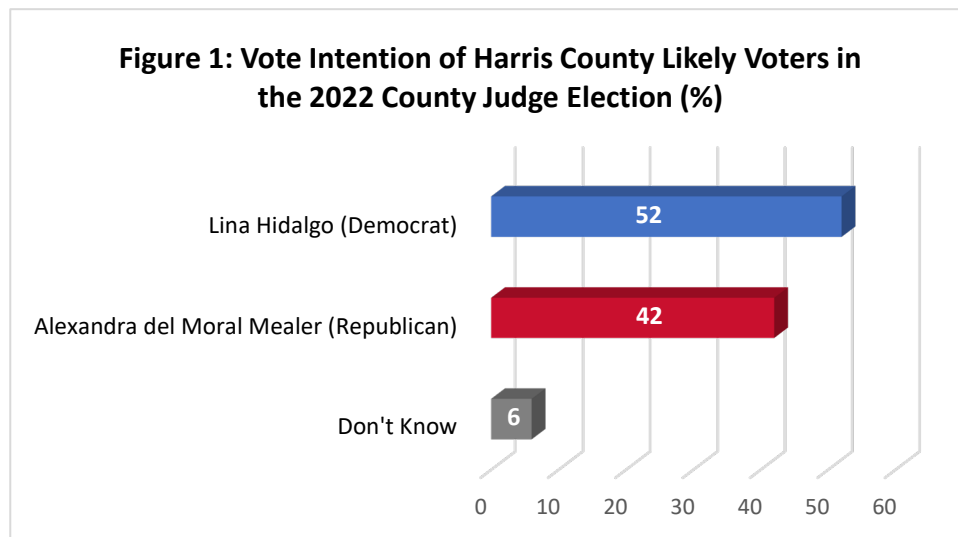
The demographics for the population of 195 likely voters that is examined in this report are as follows. Whites account for 57% of the population of 195 likely voters, Latinos 23%, Blacks 11%, and Others 6% (Asian Americans account for 66% of the Other population, those who identify as having a mixed or other racial/ethnic heritage account for 18%, and Native Americans for 16%). Women account for 55%

of this population of likely voters, men for 44% and those who identify as other or non-binary for 1%. Regarding generations, 44% of the population belongs to the combined Silent Generation (born between 1928-1945) and Baby Boomers (1946-1964) cohort, 22% to Generation X (Gen-X) (1965-1980), 25% to the Millennial (1981-1996) generation and 9% to Generation Z (1997-2004). The highest level of educational attainment of the likely voters ranges from a high school degree or less (23%), to some college or a two-year degree (31%), to a four-year degree or postgraduate/advanced degree (46%). More than half of the likely voter population identifies as Democrat (53%), while two-fifths (40%) identifies as Republican and 7% as Independent.

In the 2020 presidential election, 51% of these Harris County likely voters voted for Joe Biden, 40% voted for Donald Trump, 2% voted for other candidates, and 6% did not turn out to vote in 2020. Among these Harris County likely voters who actually cast a ballot in 2020, 55% voted for Biden, 43% for Trump and 2% for other candidates. This compares to the actual election result in 2020 in Harris County where 56.0% voted for Biden, 42.7% for Trump, and 1.3% for other candidates.

The 2022 County Judge Election in Harris County

Figure 1 provides the vote intention among likely voters for the two county judge candidates who will be on the ballot this fall in Harris County: Democrat Lina Hidalgo and Republican Alexandra del Moral Mealer. Also included is the proportion of voters who indicate that at the present time they do not know who they would vote for in November. Hidalgo holds a 10 percentage lead over del Moral Mealer, 52% to 42%, with 6% of likely voters still undecided.



In the **Hobby School survey conducted between June 27 and July 7, 2022**, Hidalgo’s vote intention among Harris County likely voters was 48%, only 1 percentage point greater than the 47% vote intention of del Moral Mealer, with 5% of likely voters undecided at that time. Between the two surveys Hidalgo’s vote intention rose by 4% while del Moral Mealer’s fell by 5%.

To place the county judge race in perspective, Table 1 provides the vote intention of Harris County voters in the 2022 contests for governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general. In the gubernatorial race, Democrat Beto O'Rourke holds a 13 percentage point over Republican Greg Abbott, 53% to 40%, with 6% undecided. In the lieutenant governor race, Democrat Mike Collier holds a 13 percentage point lead over Republican Dan Patrick, 53% to 40%, with 7% undecided. In the attorney general race, Democrat Rochelle Garza holds an 18 percentage point lead over Republican Ken Paxton, 54% to 36%, with 8% undecided. That is, in the county judge race del Moral Mealer is overperforming compared to Abbott and Patrick by 3% and to Paxton by 6%, while Hidalgo is underperforming compared to O'Rourke and Collier by 1% and to Garza by 2%.

Table 1: 2022 Statewide Vote Intention in Harris County (%)

Election Contest	Candidate	Likely Voters
Governor	Beto O'Rourke (Democrat)	53
	Greg Abbott (Republican)	40
	Mark Tippetts (Libertarian)	1
	Delilah Barrios (Green)	0
	Don't Know	6
Lt. Governor	Mike Collier (Democrat)	53
	Dan Patrick (Republican)	40
	Don't Know	7
Attorney General	Rochelle Garza (Democrat)	54
	Ken Paxton (Republican)	36
	Mark Ash (Libertarian)	2
	Don't Know	8

Table 2 provides the support for the two county judge candidates among likely voters broken down by the ethnicity/race of the voter: white, Latino, and Black. Del Moral Mealer holds a 19 percentage point advantage over Hidalgo among white voters, 58% to 39%. Hidalgo holds a 71 percentage point advantage over del Moral Mealer among Black voters, 79% to 8%, and a 44 percentage point advantage over del Moral Mealer among Latino voters, 69% to 25%.

Table 2: Ethnicity/Race and 2022 Harris County Judge Vote Intention (%)

Candidates	Likely Voters	Whites	Latinos	Blacks
Lina Hidalgo (Democrat)	52	39	69	79
Alexandra del Moral Mealer (Republican)	42	58	25	8
Don't Know/Unsure	6	3	6	13

Table 3 reveals a strong gender gap in vote intention for Hidalgo and del Moral Mealer. Hidalgo holds a 14 percentage point lead over del Moral Mealer among women, 53% to 39%, but only a 2 percentage point lead among men, 50% to 48%.

Table 3: Gender and 2022 Harris County Judge Vote Intention (%)

Candidates	Likely Voters	Women	Men
Lina Hidalgo (Democrat)	52	53	50
Alexandra del Moral Mealer (Republican)	42	39	48
Don't Know/Unsure	6	8	2

Table 4 highlights the generational differences regarding vote intention of likely voters in the county judge race. Del Moral Mealer enjoys a 16 percentage point lead over Hidalgo, 56% to 40%, among the combined Silent Generation/Baby Boomers cohort, and Hidalgo a comparable 16 percentage point lead over del Moral Mealer among Generation X, 54% to 38%. Hidalgo however is the overwhelming favorite of the combined Millennials/Generation Z cohort, with a 40 percentage point lead in vote intention over del Moral Mealer, 67% to 27%.

Table 4: Generation and 2022 Harris County Judge Vote Intention (%)

Candidates	Likely Voters	Boomers/Silent	Gen-X	Millennials/Gen-Z
Lina Hidalgo (Democrat)	52	40	54	67
Alexandra del Moral Mealer (Republican)	42	56	38	27
Don't Know/Unsure	6	4	8	6

Table 5 provides the vote intention in the county judge race among likely voters based on their highest level of educational attainment. Hidalgo holds leads over del Moral Mealer among all three educational attainment groups, ranging from a high of 15 percentage points, 55% to 40%, among those with a four-year or advanced degree, to a low of 5 percentage points, 51% to 46%, among those whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less.

Table 5: Educational Attainment and 2022 Harris County Judge Vote Intention (%)

Candidates	Likely Voters	High School or Less	2Yr/Some College	4Yr/Advanced
Lina Hidalgo (Democrat)	52	51	49	55
Alexandra del Moral Mealer (Republican)	42	46	43	40
Don't Know/Unsure	6	3	8	5

Table 6 highlights the strong relationship between partisan identification and vote intention in the race for county judge in Harris County. More than nine out of ten Harris County Democrats (93%) intend to vote for Hidalgo, compared to 2% who intend to vote for del Moral Mealer. More than nine out of ten Harris County Republicans (96%) intend to vote for del Moral Mealer, compared to 1% who intend to vote for Hidalgo. The two candidates are tied at 41% among Independents.

Table 6: Partisan ID and 2022 Harris County Judge Vote Intention (%)

Candidates	Likely Voters	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Lina Hidalgo (Democrat)	52	93	41	1
Alexandra del Moral Mealer (Republican)	42	2	41	96
Don't Know/Unsure	6	5	18	3

Table 7 provides the vote intention of Harris County likely voters who plan to vote in the 2022 Texas gubernatorial race for Democrat Beto O'Rourke, for Republican Greg Abbott, and whose response to the vote intention question was Libertarian Mark Tippetts, the Green Party's Delilah Barrios, or don't know (as Table 1 underscores, this combined third category only contains 7% of the likely Harris County voters). Nineteen out of 20 O'Rourke voters (95%) intend to vote for Hidalgo, while 2% intend to vote for del Moral Mealer and 3% remain undecided in the county judge race. Nineteen out of 20 Abbott voters (95%) intend to vote for del Moral Mealer, while 1% intend to vote for Hidalgo and 4% remain undecided in the county judge race. Among those voters who plan to vote for Tippetts, Barrios or are unsure about their gubernatorial vote intention, del Moral Mealer holds a nearly two to one advantage over Hidalgo, 41% to 22%, with almost two in five of these voters (37%) undecided.

Table 7: 2022 Gubernatorial Vote and 2022 Harris County Judge Vote Intention (%)

Candidates	All Likely Voters	O'Rourke Voters	Abbott Voters	Tippetts/Barrios/DK Voters
Lina Hidalgo (Democrat)	52	95	1	22
Alexandra del Moral Mealer (Republican)	42	2	95	41
Don't Know/Unsure	6	3	4	37

Harris County Election Report

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